

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 251110Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9101

S E C R E T BANGKOK 4295

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR TH

SUBJ: INVOLVEMENT OF RTG MELICOPTERS IN ILLICIT DRUG SMUGGLING

REF: A) 75 BANGKOK 21690, B) BANGKOK 24175, C) BANGKOK 26964

1. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A FORMAL REPLY FROM THE RTG REGARDING THE ALLEGED SMUGGLING OF NARCOTICS ON HELICOPTERS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. TO THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (TNPD). TEXT OF THE DIPLOMATIC NOTE, DATED FEBRUARY 20, 1976 FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRESENT ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION RAISED BY THE AMERICAN ABMASSADOR DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON OCTOBER 14, 1975, CONCERNING ALLEGED MISUSE OF HELICOPTERS PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR NARCOTIC SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS, HAS THE HONOUR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY THAT THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES HAVE REPLIED TO ENQUIRIES ON THIS MATTER AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE COMMANDER OF THE POLICE AIR-GROUP MAINTAINS STRICT CONTROL OVER THE USE OF AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS UNDER HIS COMMAND. WHENEVER THERE IS SUSPICION OF POSSIBLE MISUSE OF THE AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS, DIRECT INVESTIGATIONS OF THE PILOTS AND CREW CONCERNED ARE UNDER-

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TAKEN IMMEDIATELY BY THE COMMANDER; AT THE SAME TIME.

SENIOR OFFICIALS ALSO CONDUCT SECRET INVESTIGATIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE ARE CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINARY AND OTHER NECESSARY ACTIONS.

2. THERE HAD BEEN A CASE IN THE PAST WHERE A POLICE OFFICER, LEADER OF AN AIR-UNIT AT CHIENGRAI, WAS SUSPECTED OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES. ALTHOUGH INVESTIGATIONS FAILED TO REVEAL SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE FOR LEGAL PROSECUTION, THE POLICE OFFICER RESIGNED FROM THE SERVICE ON MAY 1, 1974, ON THE ADVICE OF THE COMMANDER OF THE AIR-GROUP.

3. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO NARCOTIC SUPPRESSION AND UPON LEARNING OF ALLEGATIONS OF POSSIBLE MISUSE OF AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS UNDER ITS CONTROL, IT HAS INSTITUTED BETTER PERSONNEL SELECTION AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES BY WAY OF PREVENTIVE MEASURE. END TEXT.

2. COMMENT: THE NOTE MAKES THE BASIC POINT UPON WHICH THE THAI CASE RESTS -- THAT THE INCIDENT OF SMUGGLING IS AN OLD ONE, AND WAS UNCOVERED BY THE THAI THEMSELVES, WHO THEN TOOK CORRECTIVE ACTION. WE NOTE THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY NO EVIDENCE AVAILABLE THAT WOULD INDICATE TNPd HELICOPTERS ARE NOW BEING USED TO SMUGGLE NARCOTICS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL REPORT OF TNPd HELICOPTER MISUSE SURFACED, DEA TASKED ITS SOURCES IN NORTHERN THAILAND WITH CHECKING INTO THE MATTER. TO DATE, NO FURTHER INCIDENT HAS BEEN UNCOVERED. WE ARE DISCUSSING BOTH THE PROBLEMS OF MISUSE AND UNDERUTILIZATION OF TNPd HELICOPTERS WITH THE INTERAGENCY NARCOTICS STUDY TEAM CURRENTLY IN BANGKOK.  
WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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